

# CYCLING IN GHANA: AN INDEPTH STUDY OF ACCRA



Written by: Magnus Quarshie

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## **1 Introduction**

Cycling as a means of transport is not new in Ghana. Within the north of the country for example, cycling is the predominant means of getting about. In the south however, and in particular Accra, it is not generally seen as an acceptable means of transport. Most motorists see cyclists as a nuisance and the danger involved when using the roads is often enough to dissuade many commuters from cycling. Nevertheless, factors such as traffic congestion and the relative high cost of travel is increasingly leading commuters to turn to cycling as an alternative means of transport. This study aims to partly assess the commuting situation within Accra by interviewing a sample of commuters regarding their attitudes towards commuting and in particular cycling. A similar study was carried out in 2002 by the centre which gave facts. This is a further study which appears to cover a greater extent than the previous. It is no doubt that today cyclists in the city of Accra have increased. On almost every major route including the motorway cyclists are observed on the route. The question is the need to properly integrate cyclists into the transport network to allow for choice and safety on our roads

## **2 Objectives of Study**

The main objectives of this study are to:

- I) Assess the cycling situation in Accra.
- II) Assess the potential for safe cycling in Accra.
- III) Assess the attitudes of ordinary commuters living in Accra concerning commuting and in particular cycling
- IV) Provide a qualitative basis for the development of a bicycle master plan for Accra, potentially being used as a model for other Ghanaian cities and in other sub-Saharan African Countries.

## **3 Description of Study**

A survey was undertaken in selected areas of Accra in the month of February 2004. In total, 700 people were interviewed to assess their mobility patterns and views on cycling in Accra. The surveys were carried out across the city and then zoned in areas for the purposes of the analysis. The following table shows the areas where interviews were undertaken and the respective zones. This was done as per location and nearness to each other

**Table 1**

<b>Zone 1</b>	Nima	Maamobi	New Town	Pig Farm			
<b>Zone 2</b>	37	Legon	Madina	Haatso	Ashongman		
<b>Zone 3</b>	Korle gonno	James Town	Korle Bu	Mamprobi	Mataheko	Dansoman	Odorkor/Kane
<b>Zone 4</b>	Asylum down	Ridge	Osu	Labone	Labadi	Nungua	

The survey also did obtain occupation of respondees and this is also indicated in the table below.

**Table 2**

<b>1</b>	Service
<b>2</b>	Technical
<b>3</b>	Business
<b>4</b>	Government
<b>5</b>	Unemployment
<b>6</b>	Student
<b>7</b>	Retired

Figure 1 is a blank copy of the survey form used.

In questioning commuters, we tried to establish the mobility pattern. Owing to the fact that this study sought to discover the potential of cycling in Accra questions were skewed in this direction to obtain the necessary information. The survey also tried to establish who was cycling in the existing situation where safety of soft road users is crucial; and for those who did not cycle or own a bike the study also sought to discover the reason behind. For those who intended to cycle but for safety, we also did obtain information on the type of trips they would make with the bike. Views on what they thought were the most important thing for government to do to increase bicycle usage was also obtained.

**Limitations of the survey:**

- 1 Usually respondees were unwilling to disclose their salary. However the survey sought to obtain a fair idea by requesting for salary range.
- 2 As with any voluntary non-governmental survey it is impossible to guarantee the authenticity of the answers given. For various reasons, some respondees may choose to exaggerate or understate the answers to various questions, such as age and income, rather than to just not disclose them. If a response seemed extremely unlikely, then

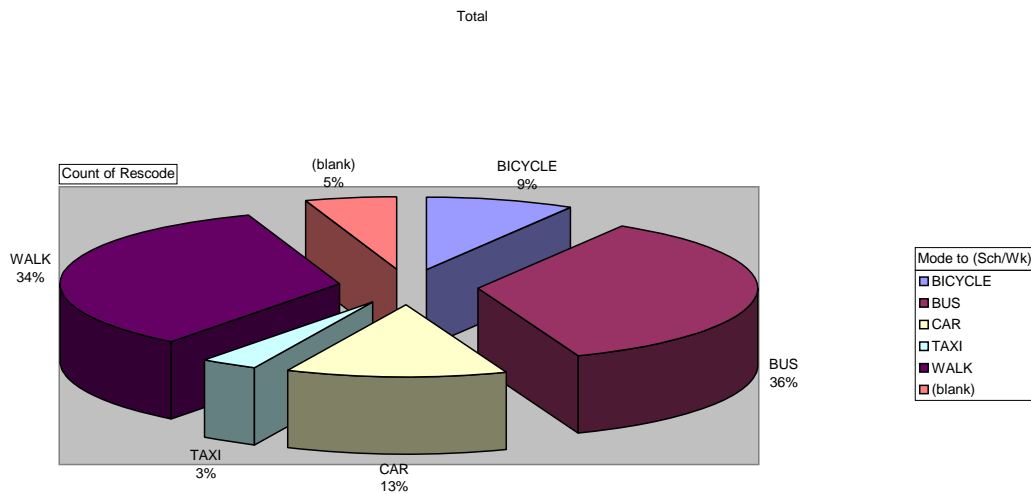
either the answer was moderated or was struck from the survey entirely. This ensured that even if individual responses could not be guaranteed, the overall average remained representational of the whole.

The survey results are shown in appendix A in table form.

Figure 1

## 4 General analysis of results

### 4.1 Methods of commuting



The Chart above shows the general mode of commuting with respect to the survey conducted

Percentage that uses public transport (buses & trotro) to get to work:36%

Percentage that uses taxis to get to work: 3%

Percentage that uses a car to get to work: 13%

Percentage that uses a bicycle to get to work: 8.6%

Percentage that walks to work: 34%

#### 4.11 Comment

Common observation of commuting within Accra would suggest that the above statistics are roughly correct, with the exception of the proportion of cyclists. Strikingly the same proportion of cyclists were recorded in the study of

2002. This is worth noting however it does not reflect the cyclists in the traffic stream indicating that some cyclists may not be using the roadway as may be expected

It should also be noted that the majority of commuter trips were undertaken using multiple forms of transport, e.g. by walking, taxi and trotro.

#### 4.2 Bike ownership as per zones

The figure below gives data on location and bike ownership

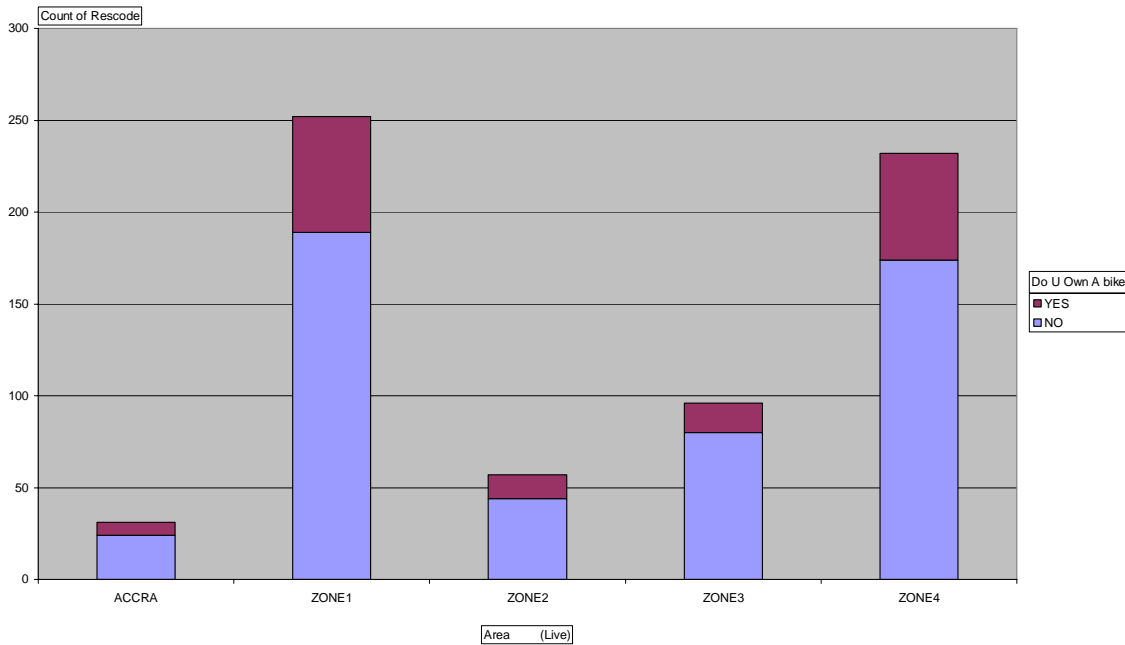
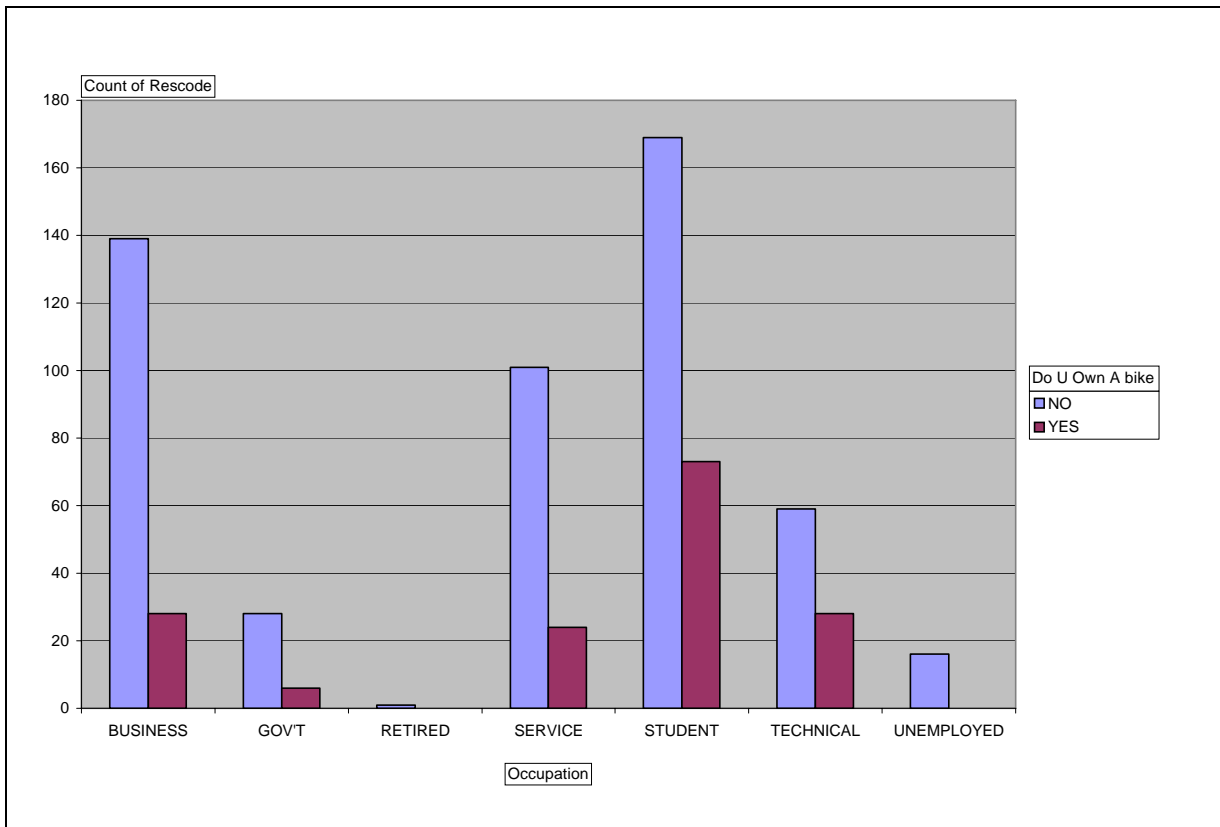


Figure 1

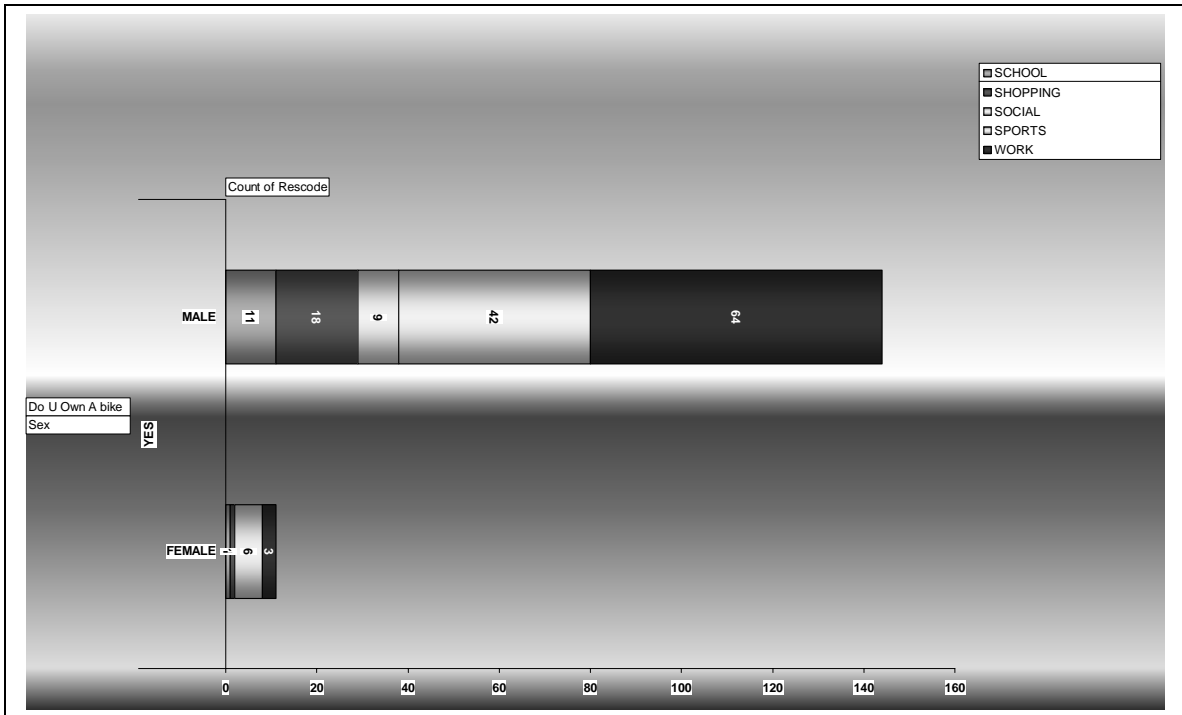
Obviously zone 1 which comprises Nima, Mamobi, Newtown and Pig Farm show the highest bike ownership followed by zone 4 comprising Asylum Down, Osu, La etc. The zone designated Accra referred to respondees living within the central business district (CBD).

### 4.3 Bike ownership as per occupation



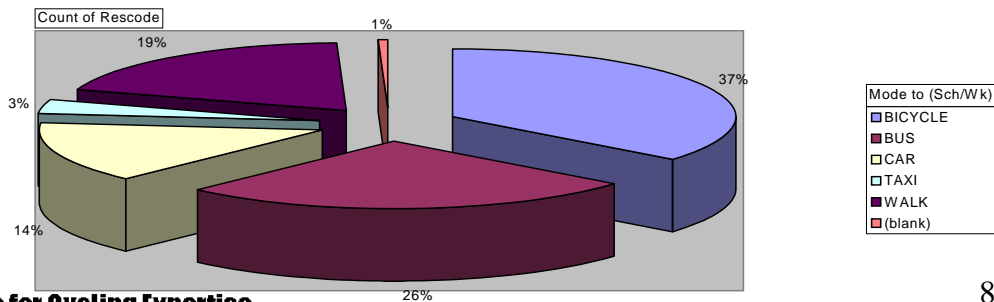
Bike ownership is highest among students followed by the business and technical (masons, carpenters, artisans in general. This is in no doubt a very active and productive group.

#### 4.4 Bike ownership as per sex and trip type



Ownership of bikes among males is greater than the female group. This could be attributed to the fact that in the past cycling had been seen as a male preserve. Generally the trend seem to change and the females are observed using the bike for rather short distances on errands and not for work and school as in the case

#### BIKE OWNERS & MODE OF COMMUTING

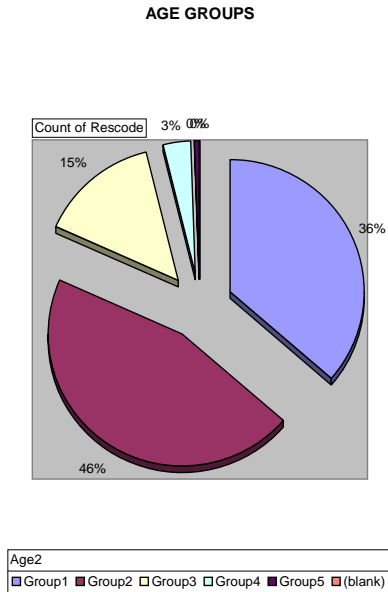




of male counterpart.

Within the respondees who own bikes it was observed that travel in the city was also by other modes. Of theses 37% traveled by bike regularly, 26% by public transport; 14% Of car owners also owned bikes, 3% who traveled by taxi also owned bikes. It is obvious that all things being equal commuters could have combined mode choice, say bike-bus'bike, or bike –taxi-bike and so on.

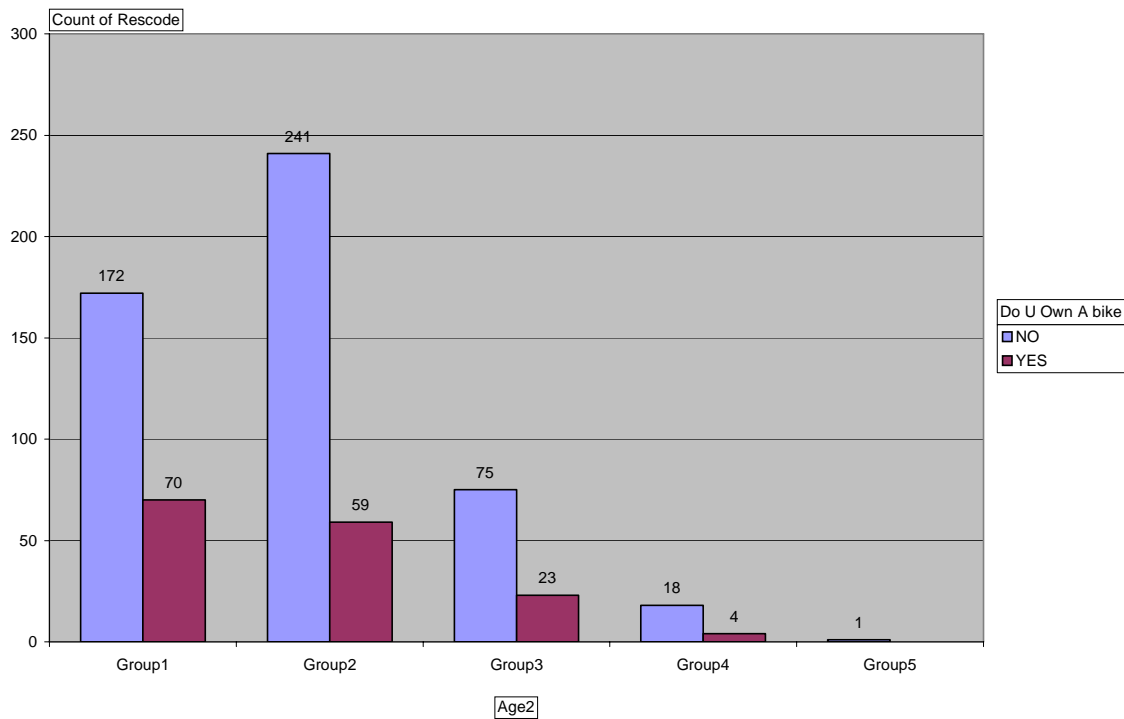
#### 4.5 Age Analysis



The population of Greater Accra grew by nearly 100% from 1984 to 2002, from 867,000 to 1.6 million in 2002.<sup>1</sup> It is anticipated that this growth will continue at a similar or greater rate in the future. The majority of this growth will either be migration from rural areas or natural population growth within Accra. Either way the population is likely to become younger, so it is necessary to consider the differing attitudes of the young and the old towards commuting within Accra.

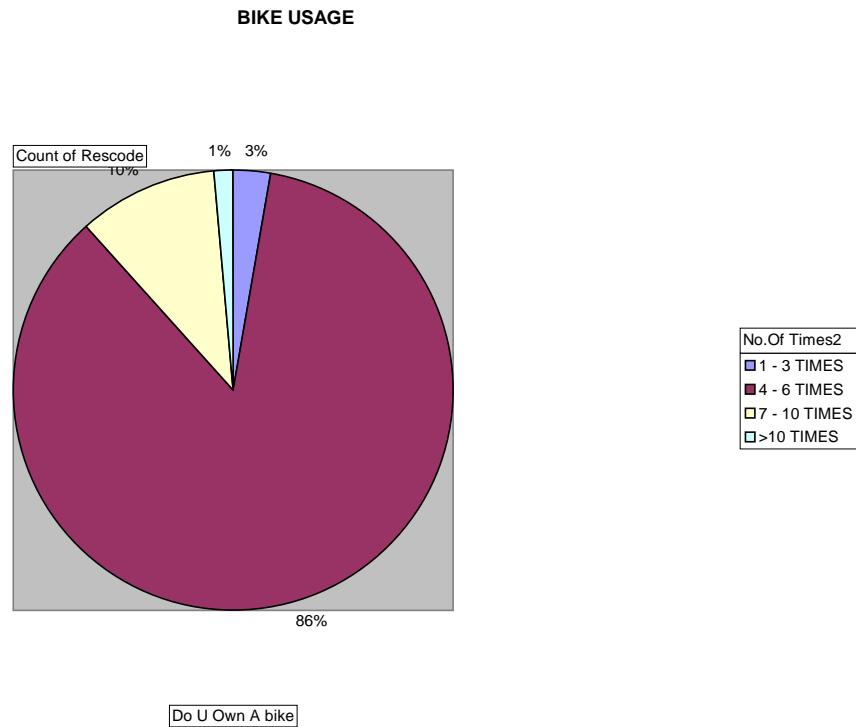
<sup>1</sup> Ghana Statistical Service

### 4.5.1 Bike Ownership and ability to cycle



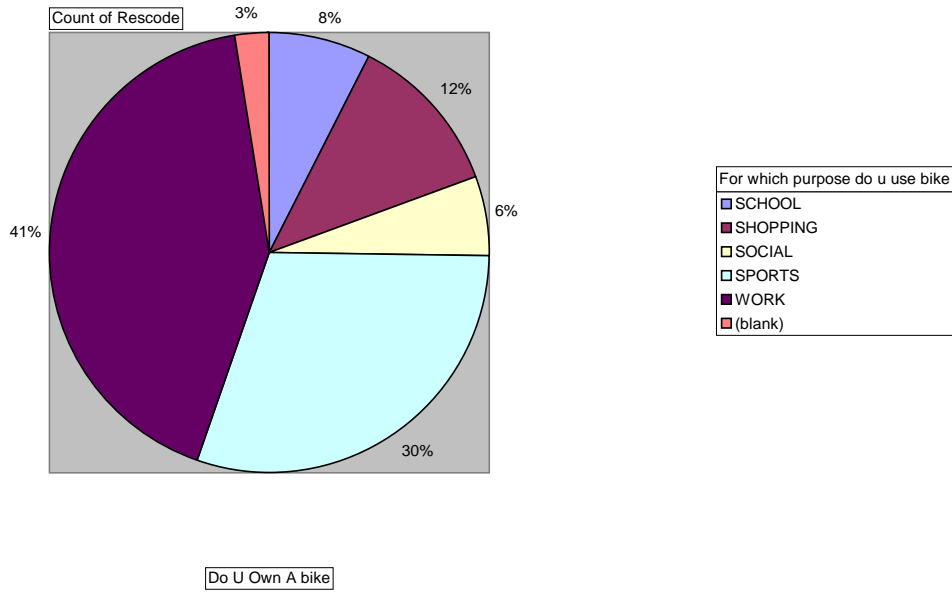
Bike ownership and ability to cycle is highest among age group below 20years and the20-30 years bracket. As the population ages bikes owner ship reduces. Nevertheless it is envisaged that a greater percentage of the population would have the ability to cycle and own bikes as the population ages.

### 4.5.2 Frequency of bike usage



Among those who cycle the study did establish the frequency of use of bikes. For frequency of between 1-3 times a week 3% of the cyclist, 4-6 times which is 86% represented the highest frequency of usage with 11 % representing 7-10 and over 10 times per week usage. The high usage of 4-6 times a week represent the student and artisanal group

PURPOSE OF BIKE

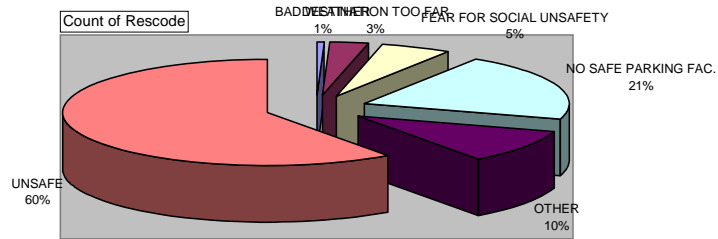


The study also established the purpose of trips as shown in the chart above.

- 41% trips for work
- 30% trips for sports
- 6% for social
- 12% for shopping trips
- 8% trips for schools

### 4.5.3 Obstacles to riding

SPECIFIC REASONS FOR NOT CYCLING

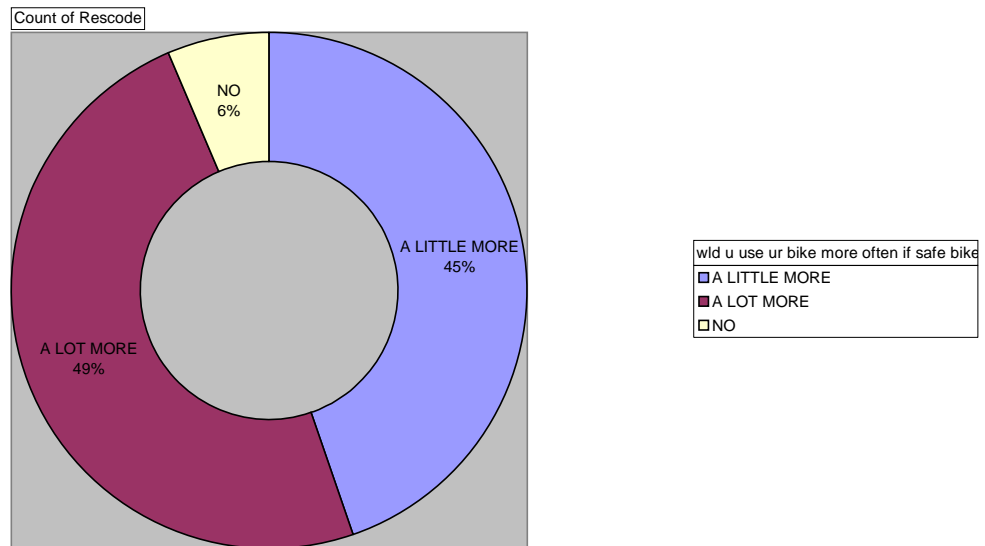


Specific reasons which withhold u  
■ BAD WEATHER ■ DESTINATION TOO FAR ■ FEAR FOR SOCIAL UNSAFETY ■ NO SAFE PARKING FAC. ■ OTHER ■ UNSAFE

A point of interest in therefore was to discover hindrances to bike use within this group. Largely it was due to unsafety that most people would not cycle and this represented 50% of the views. This was followed by no safe parking places for bikes (21%) then fear of social unsafety (9%). This had to do with unfriendliness of desired routes and dark areas in the evening.

With the bike infrastructure being crucial from the responses the study tried to confirm cyclist desire to cycle more or less, should there be an improvement by way of safe cycle network, bike parking facilities

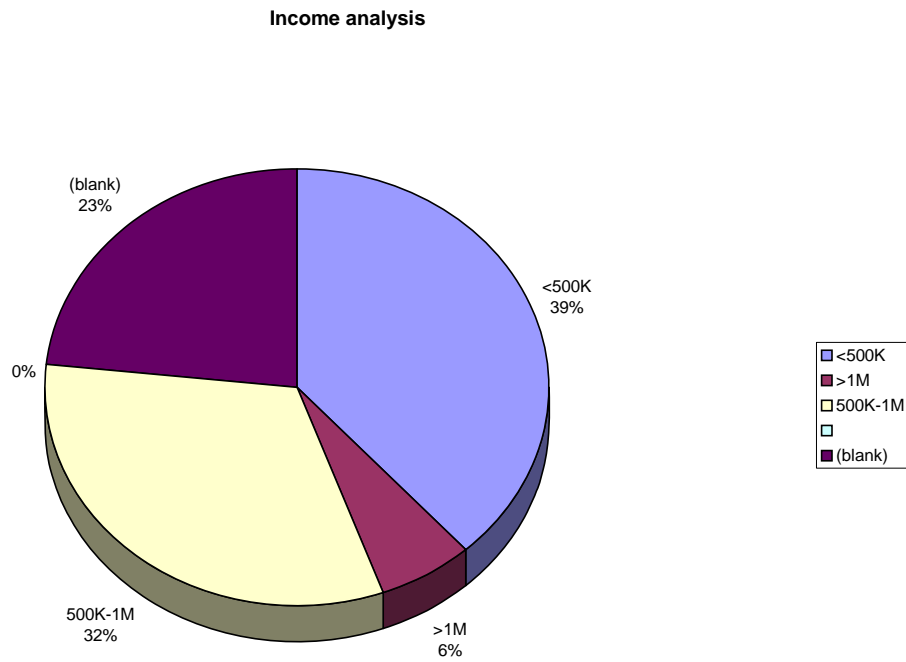
ANTICIPATED USAGE



49% responded that a lot more cycling  
45. % responded a little more  
6% said it would not change

It is conjectured that this 6% represent those who in the face of all the existing difficulties cycle.

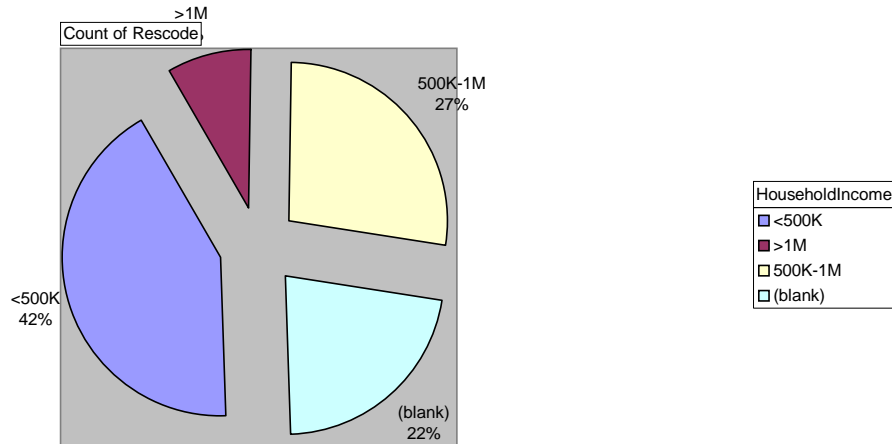
## 4.6 Income Analysis



**Figure 2**

It can be seen from Figure 2 that 39% of the people have household incomes bel500K/month, 32% have 500K-1M cedis per month. As mentioned earlier 23 % of the respondes would not provide information on incomes and /or students.

YES



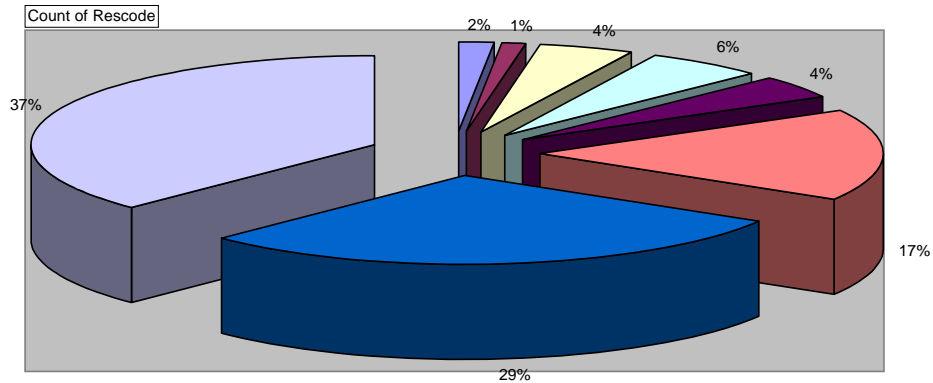
Do U Own A bike

Of the percentage that own bike household income is as follows.  
42% earned less that 500K  
27% earned between 500K-1M  
and 9% earned more than a million.

This is a clear indication that most upper and middle class do not own or use bikes to any appreciable frequency.



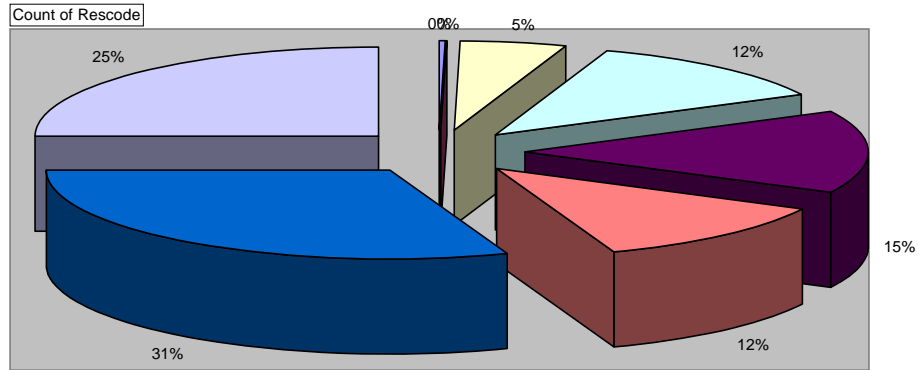
REASONS FOR NOT OWNING BIKES



whats the reason for not owning a bike			
TOO HILLY	BAD WEATHER	DESTINATIONS 2 FAR	FEAR FOR SOCIAL UNSAFETY
NO SAFE BIC FACILITIES	OTHER	TOO EXPENSIVE	UNSAFE COS OF TRAFFIC

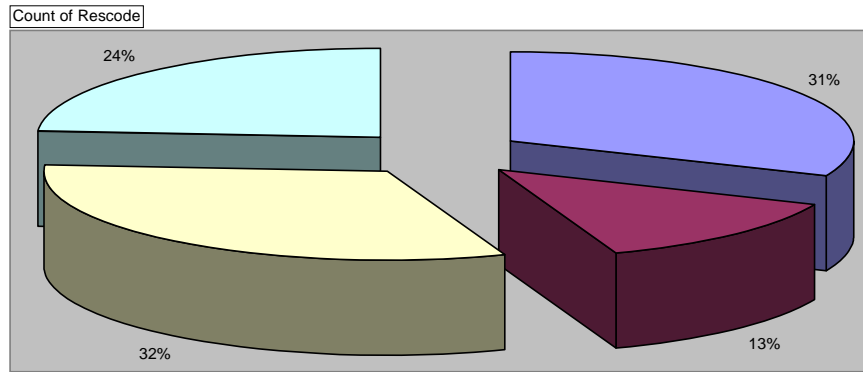
Various reasons were assigned for the low bike ownership. Whilst 37% felt fear for social unsafety was the main cause for not owning bikes, 29% thought cost of bikes was expensive; 17% gave other reasons such as interest, sweating and long distances etc. People generally have a low impression of the bike and therefore assume that it should be an item that has price hence the issue of it being expensive. For example whilst some tertiary institution students complain about high cost of bikes they pay for all sorts of prices say a minimum of 1,2M cedis for a mobile phone and even more for a DVD player.

For what purpose would you use a bike



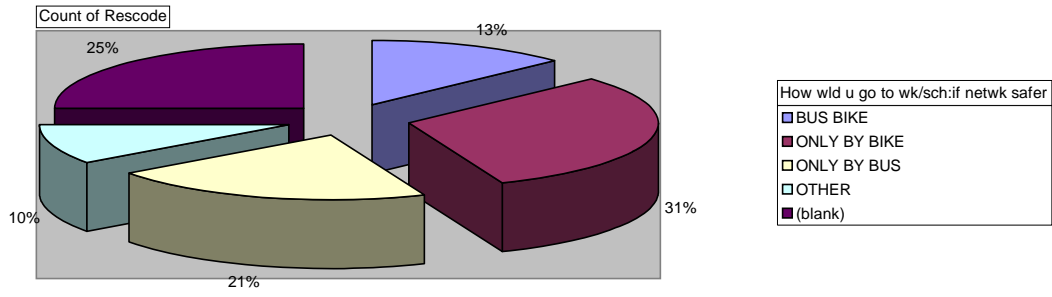
for which purpose wld u ve used it  
■ BUS STOP ■ CLINIC □ OTHER □ SCHOOL ■ SHOPPING ■ SOCIAL VISIT ■ SPORTS □ WORK

For safe network would you buy a bike

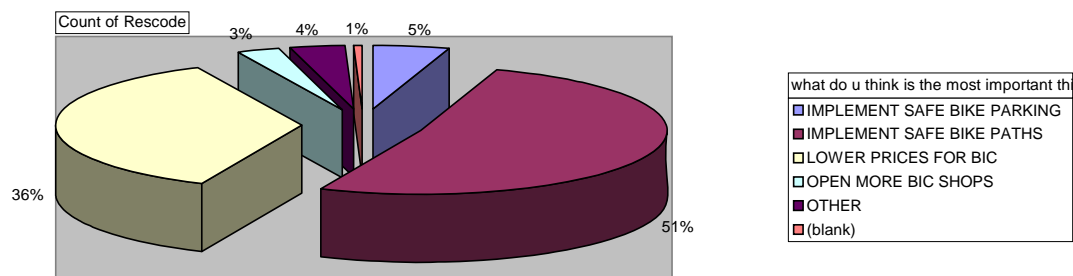


if the netwk is improved wld u bike  
■ MAYBE ■ NO □ YES □ (blank)

Travel by bike if safe?



Most important intervention by government



## 5 Conclusions

From the survey results, it can be concluded that the majority of respondees feel that commuting in Accra is too expensive, time consuming and produces too much vehicular pollution. A potential solution to help alleviate these problems would be to have more cyclists and pedestrians using the system. The advantages of this would be to:

- Alleviate congestion and the overused public transport system
- Reduce travel times and increase mobility for the low-income majority
- Reduce the total amount spent on travel
- Reduce pollution

However, the majority of respondees also felt that cycling within Accra was too dangerous, and so before cycling can be promoted in Accra, the safety issues need to be tackled. The vast majority of the respondees are in favour of improving the lot for cyclists and pedestrians and see cycling as a viable and attractive commuting option, if only it was safe to do so.